

A series looking at common tropes in storytelling. This essay looks at Mary Sues and how to use, avoid, or subvert them.

Bạn đang xem: Mary sue

Mary Sue has no positive connotations in modern literature. It is the immediate go-to insult for any female character that has above-average traits. She picks up skills like a magnet in a scrapyard, and the boys, well... let's say they're more than enthusiastic to get into her gravitational field. The Gary Stu is the male version, but isn't used anywhere as much as his female counterpart.

The term originated from a Star Trek fan-fiction called *A Trekkie's Tale*. The fan fiction itself was also a parody of self-insertion fan-fiction, which was growing increasingly common. The author surrogate in question would be written as an irreplaceable character, whose mere presence could steal hearts, whose knowledge was prodigy level, and whose death would be evidence that they were too pure to live.

Even back in 1974 it wasn't clear what a Mary Sue actually was, or how to spot one. It should be noted, however, in Pat Pflieger's essay 'Too Good to Be True,' it can be evidenced that the Mary Sue characteristics can be found from over 150 years ago.

By the original standards, a Mary Sue is an original character made and inserted into a fan-fiction, who is also an idealised version of the author (of the fan-fiction, not the original writing), mainly as wish fulfilment. As stated above, she is unique, above average in every way, and lacks realistic—or story-relevant—character flaws. She may have a unique name, eye colour, hair colour or backstory. She might even have a skill that isn't in the original canon. Canon protagonists generally love her, straight off the bat, and can be used to see whom the author prefers. The love interests and best friends are reserved for favourites, whereas those who dislike the Mary Sue tend to be the canon characters the author dislikes.

The Gary Stu (or Marty Stu) came much later, as it was widely but incorrectly believed that fan-fiction writers were all female, and is pretty much the same as a Mary Sue, apart from gender.

The term has evolved, and now covers what is known as a 'Canon Sue,' referring to a canon character that exhibits Mary Sue or Gary Stu traits. The most notable of such characters would also be of Star Trek fame: Wesley Crusher, who has long been decried as obnoxious even by the actor who portrayed him.

In recent years, the term has extended beyond Star Trek, and is now also used as flame bait: a way to rile the people who like the characters that are being labelled. It has also been used to slam characters that one simply doesn't like. The term has become obscured, but the basic principles remain the same: an idealised author avatar.

Some, if not many, people argue that a Mary Sue is quite simply a poorly-written character—one that breaks the suspension of disbelief by having far too many inconsistencies, paradoxical elements and improbable traits—which can be found in amateur work. It should be pointed out now that a Mary Sue or Gary Stu is rarely an aim of an author.

When a writer is still learning how to craft characters, it can be difficult to learn how to juggle all the elements required to flesh out believable personalities in craft. There are nuances in making protagonists interesting enough to read along with, powerful enough to defeat whatever antagonist there is, as well as skilled enough to get through whatever hurdles they need to get through to get there. It isn't new, or unique, for new writers to receive the same feedback: the character is too flawless, and flat, and impossibly perfect. Sound familiar?

In order to avoid this trait, a writer may decide to add a flaw, but flaws are difficult to a new writer. They may decide a flaw like a tragic backstory; it may remain hidden, but whether it is

known or not is not really of consequence to the plot or even the character. The most common is that he or she is an orphan—a common trope in modern literature—which results in no parental oversight. They may decide their character has some kind of substance abuse, like alcoholism, but the character may conveniently be so used to drinking that it doesn't impair them like it would a first-timer. They're so beautiful and that's why everyone hates them. These are non-flaws.

Xem thêm: Gia Đình Với Vợ Đẹp, Con Xinh Của Diễn Viên Thanh Sơn Sinh Năm Nào

Finally, it should be noted that when one writes for oneself, then they, by default (to some), end up writing a Mary Sue character. Yet this is accepted in storytelling, and the most successful authors are those who are able to widen their scope from writing for themselves to include something an audience can relate to. One of the distinguishing features of a Mary Sue is that one is not able to relate to them.

In fantasy settings, one cannot easily relate to, say, an elf. Give the elf characteristics that one can identify with, and then the fantasy is accessible. It's these characteristics that act as a port that one can use to connect to; the more fleshed out, the stronger that connection, and the less likely they are to be identified negatively and mocked as a Mary Sue or Gary Stu.

Sadly, with the nature of how the term is used now, a character can be labelled a Mary Sue or Gary Stu when they needn't be. For example, Rey from Star Wars: The Force Awakens, has regularly been labelled a Mary Sue. Yet, the reasons listed are all explainable within the film.

Spoilers ahead!

Firstly, most of Rey's skills are listed within the first few minutes of the audience meeting her. She is a scavenger living in the harsh wasteland of Jakku and as a result has needed to learn how to fight and dismantle spaceships to survive, as well as learning multiple languages—to help negotiate prices for pieces. Practice makes perfect, and she's had at least a decade to perfect this. Then, in retrospect, by the end of the film we learn she is force sensitive, and any fan of the Star Wars franchise know this comes with some serious perks.

It should be noted now that all the things that Rey gets chastised for, her predecessors didn't. Anakin Skywalker was an ace pilot pre-teen, and yet Rey, who has been fixing things longer than he was alive at that point, is rubbished for knowing how to fly the Millennium Falcon. Not only that, but Luke Skywalker manages to destroy a Death Star in an X-Wing without any training.

Rey also learns Jedi tricks from experiencing or watching them herself, performed by the more trained Kylo Ren. And she is only able to defeat Kylo Ren in a duel because a) he was wounded, b) Kylo Ren wasn't trying to kill her, whereas she was trying to survive—like she had been doing on Jakku, and c) the lightsaber clearly preferred Rey due to the moment she heard it calling for her in Maz Kanata's establishment.

All of these details are within the film; some of it is in dialogue, others it is explained in action—such as Rey defending BB8 from scavengers. Yet, it is still protested. But that doesn't mean an author shouldn't foreshadow these things. In fact, done correctly, the pay-off is much more rewarding. Just because one risks being lambasted by internet trolls and picky readers doesn't mean they shouldn't exercise their writing skills by practicing important techniques and elements.

The simplest way to not write a Mary Sue is to remember to flesh out your character. To remember that flaws can be used to benefit a plot, and that non-flaws are non-helpful. Also, to focus on your side characters as much as your main, so it does not feel like they're there simply to be amazed by them.

You establish skills early on, ones that can evolve. If they have a character flaw, make it real and in the moment. It can be used to hinder the characters in their journey, but it can also be

used to help them grow as people. Mary Sue's have no room for character development; make sure your characters do.

And finally, remember who your character is. Let them speak to you like they are a living person. Find out what their dreams are, their insecurities, and ultimately their weaknesses. Treat them as a person and remember that the joy of being human is in our faults, and without them the story would be dull. Sure, sometimes there are times that call for a Mary Sue, like in fiction written to vent or fan-fiction where the consequences are pretty tame. Make sure you keep some beta-readers in touch and be prepared for some honest feedback.

Xem thêm: Sự Thật Về Gia Tài Triệu Đô Của Vợ Chồng Cẩm Ly Mà Như Ông Nội Tôi”

When a reader spots a Mary Sue character, they know what's coming: little to no character development, a harem of love interests, and some serious Deus Ex Machina thanks to the character's bat-belt of skills. That's why authors try to avoid writing them, but you can't please everyone. So my advice is this: remember the original definition of the term, the idealised character, and steer clear of it.

Chuyên mục: KHÁI NIỆM

XEM THÊM CÁC THÔNG TIN MỚI NHẤT TẠI: <https://genshinimpactmobile.com>

Bài viết [Mary Sue. The Definitive Guide To The Gary Stu](#) đã xuất hiện đầu tiên vào ngày [GENSHINIMPACTMOBILE.COM](https://genshinimpactmobile.com).

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